Approaches to the problem of extraction that focus only on the material and call for the end of extraction ignore the level of drives and secure the place of consumption within the human psyche. Development made sustainable by an emphasis on environmental protection is another shift within the system perpetuating capitalist domination. Turns case, internal link to environmental harms because we can’t care for it, and leads to a destruction of the subject, which is functionally extinction. **Stiegler[[1]](#footnote-1) ‘12**:

**We all know that** in no case will this new global capitalism be able to develop in reproducing the **modes of production and consumption** that have been **characteristic of Western, Japanese, and Korean industrial democracies. For the exportation of** this mode of life **is** also that of the **growth in the rate of production of toxins of all sorts toward** the greatest part of **the planetary population, and which can result in nothing else but the disappearance of the human race—to say nothing of the phenomena of [and[ the destruction of psychic apparatuses that also create their effects as quickly as “growth” spreads over the world, which is indeed, by this very fact, a stunted growth [une mécroissance]. The new global capitalism will not be able to renew its energies without inventing a new logic and new objects of investment—and here the word investment must be taken literally and in all its senses: both the sense it has in industrial economy and its sense within libidinal economy. At this stage of my exposé, it is interesting to check for heart murmurs in a text by Jeremy Rifkin which is circulating all over France and Europe. Rifkin, setting his discourse under the watchword of “the end of the age of oil,” asks how we are to assure a “sustainable development” but without ever asking the question of the problem of stunted growth, that is, of a “growth” that destroys desire, and that deindividuates producers as well as consumers**, stunting the dynamism of what Max Weber called the spirit of capitalism, a spirit that has to be apprehended as libidinal energy and that can be constituted only in processes of sublimation henceforth annihilated by marketing techniques. While never taking up these questions (which were however the horizon of both his European Dream and The Age of Access), Rifkin insists, apropos the age of oil and more g**enerally of fossil fuels, its growing “external costs” (which in economics is called negative externalities): he thus describes the third limit encountered by a capitalism become an actually globalised technological system of production and of consumption. In this context, he writes, there is a residual stock of fossil energy that we will have to learn to exploit to the hilt,** that is, the most economically possible, **while** at the same time **putting into place other processes for the production and consumption of energy: So as to prepare the future, each government will have to exploit new energy sources and establish new economic models. I am myself convinced that the stakes are a change in the economic model. But I do not believe that the heart of the question is the energy of subsistence: the real question is that of an energy of existence that is libidinal energy. Now, by only asking the question of a new production of renewable, sustainable energy of subsistence, founded on the intermediary storage by the technology of the production of hydrogen, Rifkin would have us believe that the energy crisis is a passing one and that it will be able to be surmounted, and along with it the third limit of capitalism, without having to ask the question of libidinal energy, without taking into account this second limit which is the truth of the third one: where the libido has been destroyed, and where the drives it contained, as Pandora’s box enclosing every evil, henceforth are at the helm of beings devoid of attention, and incapable of taking care of their world.**

Extinction inevitable under cap, their cap good arguments don’t engage the question of desire and only speak to its current form. Cap can constantly change so long as the level of drives is based on consumption, they need to win consumption good.

This juxtaposition of consumption and production destroys the subject’s existence and drives. The current deplenishment of these resources should be the point of departure from the logic of consumption and production, instead of the AC act of legitimizing certain forms of production once again, it is time to break free from carbon. **Stiegler 2**:

**If consummation is that which destroys its object, libido is to the contrary that which, as desire and not as drive, that, as the sublimation intrinsic to desire, takes care of its object. This is why the question of the third limit of capitalism is not that of the relinquishment of fossil fuels but rather the relinquishment of a drive-driven economy and the reconstitution of a libidinal economy, that is, a sustainable one, given that this energy increases with the frequentation of its objects. The third limit of capitalism is not only the destruction of the reserves of fossil fuel, but the limit constituted by the drive to destruction of all objects in general by consumption, in so far as they have become objects of drives, and not objects of desire and attention—the psychotechnological organization of consumption provoking the destruction of attention in all its forms, on the psychic level as well as the collective level. Because he seems to ignore everything involved in the second limit of capitalism and its meaning once the third limit has been reached, Rifkin’s discourse seems to me fraught with dangers: he would have us believe that a drive-driven growth could be sustained owing to the technology of hydrogen. And yet, this discourse is interesting and of import for at least three reasons: 1. it proposes a real alternative to the question of the energy of subsistence with this system founded on hydrogen which would allow a harmful limit to be pushed back; 2. it poses the questions about energy that are never distinct from questions on networks of communication and information, that is, hypomnesic systems and retentional devices of tertiary retentions; 3. finally, and above all, it posits that the network founded on hydrogen must be based on the model of social networks made possible by the World Wide Web and, thus, must get beyond the opposition between production and consumption. An organization based on consumption, and constituted by its opposition to production, is dangerous not only because it produces excess quantities of carbon dioxide, but because it destroys minds. The opposition of production and consumption has as its consequence that both producers and consumers are proletarianized by the loss of their knowledge: they are reduced to an economy of subsistence, and deprived of an economy of their existence—they are deprived of libidinal economy, that is, of desire. This is why the fundamental question opened by the combination of the three limits of capitalism is the overcoming of this opposition and of the proletarinarization it engenders structurally. Now what is extremely interesting in Rifkin’s proposition consists in positing, based on the position set forth in the first lines of the study, the energy systems and information or mnemotechnical systems co-develop, that the most recent system of communication, the Internet, breaks precisely with the opposition of consumption and production and thus constitutes the possibility of implementing a new distributed and decentralized network of sustainable energies where everyone would be producer as well as consumer, by combining the technology of stockage by hydrogen and that of networking along the lines of the Internet model. Confronted with this unprecedented challenge to planetary (planetarianized) humanity—a challenge of practically sublime dimensions, which demands an extraordinary mobilization of the forces of the spirit to meet it: a challenge convoking what Kant called the suprasensible, that is, also the infinite (infinitely renewable)—the temptation of the industrial and capitalist world is to come up with a technological and scientific response in denial of the three limits of capitalism. This temptation borne of denial cannot apprehend: 1. that these three limits, when they combine, produce a systemic evolution at a superior level, that is, a phenomenon of emergence, 2. that we must change industrial models not only to produce a new technical and scientific rationality, but to constitute a new social rationality, productive of motivation, of reasons for living together, that is, of taking care of the world and of those living there, 3. that the fundamental question is here to reorient the financial fluxes toward long-term investments by waging war against speculation, but also against modes of life founded on the short term, of which the most every-day example is the organization of society by a marketing systematically exploiting drives by destroying libido as that which evinces the capable of sustainable investment. Consumption that becomes drive-based is profoundly dangerous for society. If there were no limit to this consumption, and if fossil fuels were inexhaustible, the catastrophe would perhaps be even greater than the one resulting from the deplenishment of fossil fuels. Perhaps this deplenishment is finally a kind of stroke of luck: the opportunity to understand that the true question of energy is not that one, that the energy of subsistence is of interest only insofar as it contributes to an energy of existence—and is such in its capacity to project what I call the plane of consistencies. Now this is the true stake of what is today called, in an ambiguous expression, ascendant innovation.**

The alternative is **overidentification** with the system of resource extraction and consumption. This is the only way to access the level of drives and criticize the systems that underlie capitalism. Other ways are minor adjustments that allow capitalism to come back stronger. This means an increase in resource extraction. **Uebel**:[[2]](#footnote-2)

**The masochist changes the world, as Deleuze puts it, to the extent that she "questions the validity of existing reality in order to create a pure ideal reality, an operation which is perfectly in line with the judicial spirit of masochism" ("Coldness" 33).** This "judicial spirit" is, in practice, intersubjective (based on contractual relations), judgmental, and assertive. Its power is directed over, even against, others—to educate, to persuade, to bring into agreement. Masochism's judicial spirit becomes most recognizably political when it sweeps the social field in the form of mass fantasy, so that in the case of oppressed groups it often takes the form of a kind of politically idealized suffering in the name of future rewards. 11 Social suffering serves as a prelude to, and in reality a warranty for, the achievement of future satisfaction. It is perhaps Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel who most boldly underscores **the political—what she sees as the utopic—force of the so-called counterpleasures, when she associates "historical ruptures which give an inkling of a new world" (293) with the dynamics of perversion. A crucial point to bear in mind here, however, is that, like any tool for change, masochism can be put to both progressive and regressive uses, deployed as a political tactic for utopian change and, conversely, for cultural entrenchment and even gender violence.Deployed in the name of either revolutionary or retrograde causes, masochism works by calling into being the very Law—the limit or penance—that ostensibly blocks access to the ideal by thwarting what Lacan once called the "will to jouissance." So from outside the politico-libidinal matrix of master/slave, it looks [End Page 397] as if masochism involves only the sacrifice of one's own enjoyment. However, from within, the masochist reveals the truth of symbolic power: subordination to the exact letter of the Law, thereby exaggerating its obscene dimension, subverts the very meaning of regulation. The potential political value of this is significant, as Reik's example of the masochistic art of resistance reveals: Austrian railroad workers, protesting low wages and long working hours, go on strike, but rather than walk off the job, they carry it out with increased conscientiousness and punctuality, following the railway board's myriad bureaucratic regulations to the letter. The result is a total paralysis of train traffic, and with trains neither arriving nor departing, the company elites are forced to capitulate (108; cf. 154-59). The workers, through radical obedience to the law, are able to turn the misery of their working conditions into a politically satisfying conclusion. Closing the gap between the law and its realization, extreme submission has the precise effect of revealing the fantasmic support of the law in its full inconsistency. 12 As a mode of dissidence, masochism depends on a strategy of "passive resistance," evoking a constellation of other strategies for social change such as the hunger strike, sit-ins, and related forms of nonviolent passive protest. When deployed in these ways to expose the inconsistency of cultural protocols, masochism becomes fully political, a strategy of resistance, wherein "the masochist is a revolutionist of self-surrender" (Reik 156). Given masochism's primary function as defiant submissiveness ("victory through defeat" is Reik's famous formula), there are expedient reasons to conceptualize it across the limits of the sexual or the erotic, into the social.Masochism, despite remaining a slippery (and at times hotly contested) term in psychiatric and psychoanalytic discourses, 13 has emerged in recent critical treatments as a particularly flexible, even necessary, form of cultural critique. It is within this context that one of Deleuze's most valuable insights is intelligible as a fully political revelation: "[The masochist's] apparent obedience conceals a criticism and a provocation" ("Coldness" 88). Remarkably, the fundamentally utopian energy of masochism increases with cultural advancement. If masochism is indeed "unmistakably the most important culturally" among the usual perversions, it is so, to follow Reik, precisely because it is the chief register of culture, developing coterminously with it: as culture progresses, masochism increasingly becomes a psychic necessity (264; cf. 383). 14 But, as Reik himself rather presciently points out, masochism is fast evolving beyond its status as a psychic necessity to become something of a mental luxury, a political option (though admittedly never available to all) replacing what had once [End Page 398] been diagnosed strictly as a psychic condition simply suffered by desiring subjects beyond their own will. Despite its status as luxury, masochism appears no less urgent a tool for reimagining or remaking the self and the social. Leaving behind the limited notion of the masochist as a self-destructive subject, one to whom something is done, or on whom something is perpetrated, we are able to see the masochist as an idealizer par excellence, a revolutionary who seeks after a utopic condition that is never merely or only libidinal**

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   *American Literary History* 14.2 (2002) 389-411 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)